



Riverlands Montessori School

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ANNUAL REPORT

2014

Riverlands Montessori School is located in the Swan Valley with quiet surroundings, native gardens and a delightful atmosphere away from the bustle of the city. Our school community is positive and vibrant with experienced teaching staff and programs that promote involvement in the wider community. Children are encouraged to develop at their own pace in a creative environment incorporating Montessori Philosophy.

Riverlands' first home in 1991 was in historical "Cornwall House", Middle Swan. In July 1998, the school relocated to Whiteman Park for 5 years. In 2004, the dream of a permanent home was realized when the 6 acre property in Arthur Street, near Whiteman Park, was purchased.

We have a Playgroup, three Children's Houses (3-6 year olds), two Lower Primary classes (6-9 year olds) and one Upper Primary class (9-12 year olds). There is a Board of Governance and an active Parents and Friends Association.

Mission

Riverlands Montessori School's purpose is to provide an educational program in which foundations are laid for positive attitudes towards learning and life. It is a non-denominational school based on a commitment to social understanding and care of the environment. The school aims to educate the whole child within a Montessori environment, to develop in children the ability to accept responsibility for their own learning through choice, and to:

- ❖ encourage children to proceed at their own pace
- ❖ socialise children to prepare them for life
- ❖ nurture the intellect of the child in analytical, creative and emotional terms
- ❖ assist children to fulfil their potential and contribute positively towards society.

Goals

- ❖ To foster a positive school atmosphere, characterised by enthusiasm and a happy work environment.
- ❖ To develop a balanced, comprehensive and innovative curriculum that provides for individual learning, promotes educational excellence and is responsive to students' needs.
- ❖ To encourage a positive relationship between students, staff and the home so that children feel confident and excited about coming to school.
- ❖ To nurture a strong community spirit and involvement in the life of the school.
- ❖ To work towards improving the school's facilities and environment to enhance the image of the school.
- ❖ To increase the resources available to implement the curriculum.
- ❖ To maintain a high profile in the local community to encourage future enrolments.
- ❖ To build a collaborative team of staff who promote the ethos and philosophy of the school.
- ❖ To encourage and support staff to update their qualifications and to further their educational knowledge and skills.
- ❖ To provide effective communication within the school and seek feedback on the school's performance from its community.
- ❖ To promote public confidence in Montessori education.

Report from the Board

The Board has the challenge of governance. We have a group of board members who bring with them a breadth and depth of experience crucial to appropriate and progressive decision making. It is always the aim of the Board to widen that skill base and to actively recruit members that offer the current expertise needed and be mindful of the changing trends and needs of the school.

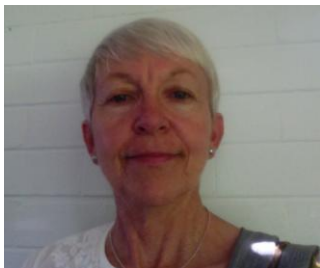
It is with gratitude that I thank the members for their contribution to the smooth running of Riverlands Board. Their contribution is in an honorary capacity in addition to the many other roles they perform throughout the year.

Each year brings with it the usual challenges to balance incoming and outgoing along with making many decisions in support of the school continuing to grow with the Strategic Plan that is in place.

There have been fabulous events that showcased this wonderful school and energy that goes into producing some brilliant work and fundraising results. I particularly enjoyed the Art Sale and the Steve Hughes talk. The most recent was attending the Graduation Corroboree to witness a whole school community celebrating the 2014 school year.

I wish to thank the many who contribute every day to this amazing school community. They include our very special staff, the parents and friends, the students and various community members. There is always a desire by all to go the extra distance no matter the event and that is the ingredient of Riverlands Montessori School.

I look forward to a successful 2015 working with the dedicated school community providing Montessori education for children.



Quona Litchfield
Chairperson

Principal's Report

We had 12 Graduates in 2014, the highest number in the history of the school. This year also saw the last time we had Year 7 students as the government had decreed from 2015, Year 7 will be high school.

Our Graduates will go on to be ambassadors for the school and we are very proud to see them leave us as independent learners, with a strong sense of identity and a keenness to be positive contributors to society, their Montessori education here at Riverlands has put them in good stead.

The staff and parents have had a year filled with a wide variety of experiences from Nanga Bush Camp to Messy Mud Day. Our whole school Craft Exhibition was highly successful, with the children producing pieces of such a wide variety including mosaics, weaving, sculpture, crochet and international cultural pieces such as rain sticks and flying fish.

We enjoyed seeing our parents and the children's extended family members join us for Corroborees, Grandparents & Friends Morning Tea, Sundowners, Family Sleepover and all our regular events. They continued to provide their support willingly and enthusiastically as they saw the value in being part of their children's education and being active participants in our school community.

In 2014 we held a unique event – Cubic27 – to raise funds to make improvements to the art room. Kevin and Judith Price were instrumental in their initiative and creative genius to bring the P & F event to fruition. It was an amazing event with affordable professional artworks and brought people from all over Perth to our school.

As in every school, we farewelled staff members who have moved on to other places for various reasons – Peter Board, Kaylene Fitzgerald, Harvey Rose, Dawn Gregson, Angela Howard – we wished them all well and thanked them for sharing their talents and expertise with us. They will never be forgotten as they are part of the fabric of our school.

The Board continued to provide stability to the school, the release of the Riverlands Montessori School Strategic Improvement Plan in early 2015 will be the result of the whole school's collaboration to move the school into the next stage.

My personal thanks are extended to every member of the school's community – the children, staff, parents and the Board. Each one of them played a necessary role in the aim of our school, to provide quality Montessori education to our children so they will have the opportunity to grow and develop into lifelong learners and positive members of our society. Our Graduates are evidence of this success.

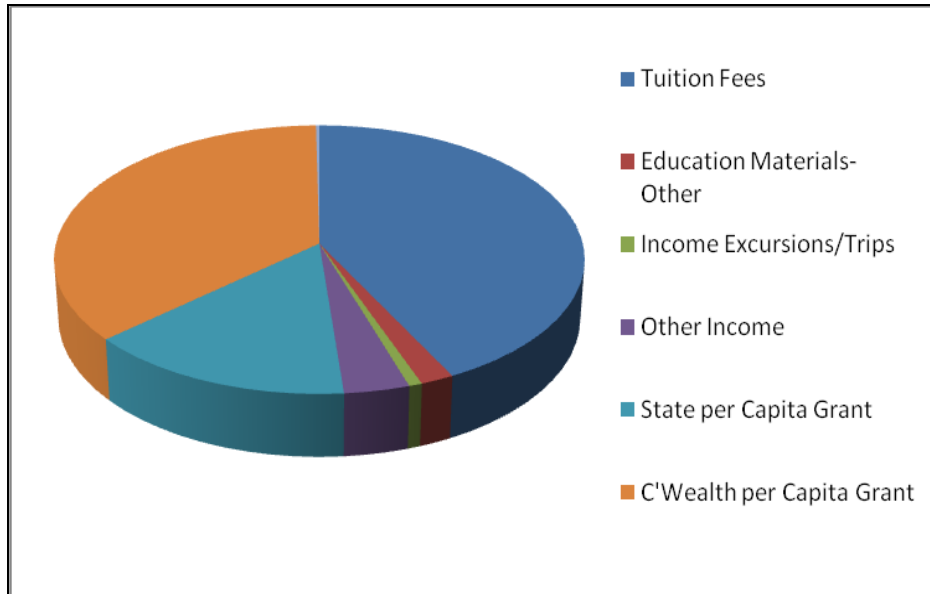


*Ineke Oliver
Principal*

Financial Information

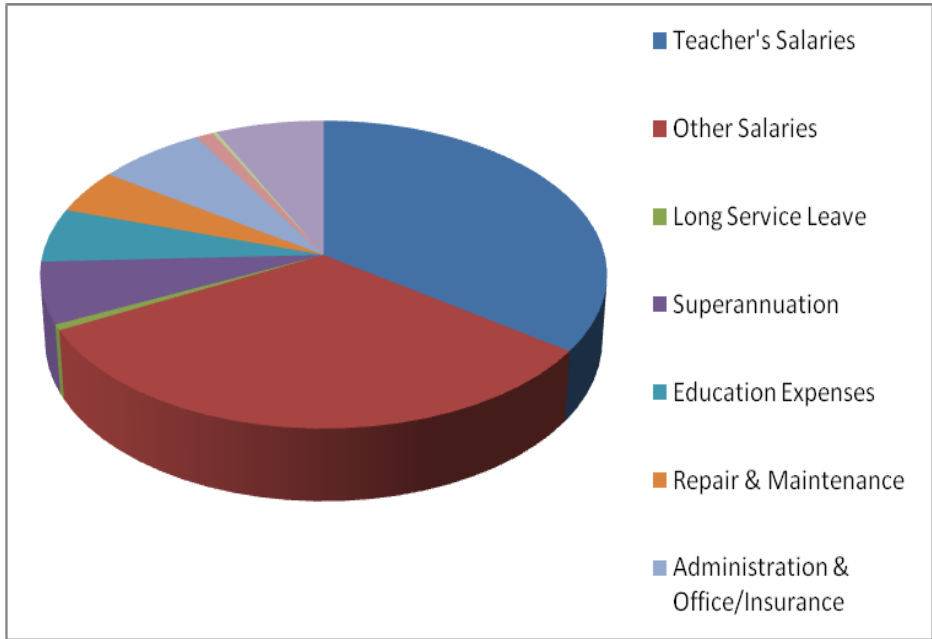
The School Board is closely involved in the annual budgeting process and reviews the School's performance compared to the budget on a monthly basis. The strategic plan forms the basis for the long term financial planning of the School.

Income



	\$
Tuition Fees	783,156
Education Materials - Other	33,711
Income Excursions/Trips	13,203
Other Income	65,893
State - Per Capita Grant	270,791
Commonwealth - Per Capita Grant	669,505
Other Grants	4,211

Expenditure



	\$
Teachers Salaries	626,616
Other Salaries	577,236
Long Service Leave	10,951
Superannuation	115,488
Education Expenses	101,516
Repairs & Maintenance	83,917
Administration & Office/Insurance	124,355
Loan Interest	20,458
Bad Debts	4,592
Depreciation Expense	125,179



*Robyn Hart
Business Manager*

2014 School Events

- ☞ After School Sports
- ☞ Anzac Day recognition
- ☞ Art Classes
- ☞ Astronomy Evening
- ☞ Board/Staff Breakfast
- ☞ Boomers Charity Day
- ☞ Born Storyteller Creative Writing Program
- ☞ Camp for Lower Primary – 2 days
- ☞ Camp for Upper Primary – 5 days
- ☞ City to Surf Riverlands Team
- ☞ Class Parent Morning Teas
- ☞ Corroborees
- ☞ Craft Fair
- ☞ Cubic Art Exhibition
- ☞ Dance Performance, whole school
- ☞ Dr. Steve Hughes – speaker from USA - event
- ☞ Excursions for all classes each term
- ☞ Family Movie Nights
- ☞ Family Sleepover on campus
- ☞ Graduation Dinner
- ☞ Grandparents & Friends Morning Tea
- ☞ GRIP Leadership Conference
- ☞ Guitar Lessons
- ☞ Harmony Day Celebrations
- ☞ Indonesian Lessons for all full-time students
- ☞ International Peace Day Recognition
- ☞ Interschool Sports
- ☞ Market Day
- ☞ Music Quiz Night
- ☞ Newsletters
- ☞ Open Classrooms
- ☞ P & F Summer Lecture Series
- ☞ Parent Information Sessions
- ☞ Parent Observations
- ☞ Parent Child Sessions
- ☞ Parenting Workshops
- ☞ Piano Lessons
- ☞ Physical Education Specialist sessions
- ☞ Pyjama Day
- ☞ Rollerskating Session
- ☞ School Tours
- ☞ Sundowners each term for all families
- ☞ Teddy Bears' Picnic
- ☞ Treetops Montessori School interschool visit
- ☞ Upper Primary Extreme Sports
- ☞ Yearbook

Staff Information

Qualification	Percentage of classroom teachers and school leaders who hold this qualification
Bachelor Degree	100%
Honours/Post Graduate Degree	17%
Diploma	85%

Staff Attendance:

The attendance rate of the staff in 2014 was in excess of 90% with minimal sick and other leave.

Staff Professional Learning:

The total funds expended on staff professional learning in 2014 - \$13,112. All staff participated in relevant professional development sessions during the year. The sessions were provided from a variety of sources including AISWA, Montessori Australia Foundation, Sonic Learning, Dyslexia-Speld Foundation, Kids Matter, Autism Association and Universities. Most of the teaching staff attended the Montessori Australian Centenary National Conference held in Canberra.

Staff Satisfaction:

Riverlands staff are committed to the school and to Montessori education. Social events are held during the year and are well attended.



Riverlands Montessori School
Staff - 2014



Back Row (L-R): Marie Chapman, Karen Holden-Rankine, Ashlea Day.
Middle Row (L-R): Kym Murphy, Leah Hampton, Harvey Rose, Ian Chapman, Naomi Stuckey, Angela Howard.
Front Row (L-R): Kate Oliver, Marina Begovich, Debra Beach, Brianna Rose, Ineke Oliver, Leigh Franz, Dawn Gregson, Tess Gomes, Tamara Scott.
Absent: Wynona Campbell, Farida Duncan, Bradley Favas, Robyn Willems.

Education Program

The Montessori National Curriculum is accredited by the Australian Curriculum Reporting and Assessment Authority (ACARA) as an alternative to the Australian Curriculum for Phase One (English, Mathematics, Science and History). Whilst not all subject areas of the Australian Curriculum have yet been endorsed, we have continued to deliver the Montessori Curriculum as it is mapped against the WA Curriculum Framework for those subjects not yet in the Australian Curriculum.

The school is part of the Montessori Australia Foundation's Quality Assurance Program. This means the school undergoes a rigorous examination of its teaching practices, equipment, physical and psycho-social environments together with the professional development and expertise of the teaching staff in accordance with Montessori philosophical aspects.

Classes are arranged in 3 year age spans, according to Dr. Montessori's scientific observations of the different developmental stages of children:

- Children House (3 to 6 year olds)
- Lower Primary (6 to 9 year olds)
- Upper Primary (9 to 12 year olds)

These groupings not only meet the needs of the children but also create a sense of community. The older child learns through teaching the younger. The younger child is inspired to do more advanced work by having the older children in the environment.

Each child's education program is individualised and carefully monitored and recorded. All children are assessed informally and formally in each phase of their education and we follow all mandated forms of assessment as directed by the government.

Throughout 2014 the teaching staff participated in workshops where student work samples were moderated in accordance with Australian Curriculum standards. The nexus between the Australian Curriculum, the Montessori National Curriculum and the Early Years Framework were also examined in-depth during workshops throughout the year with the whole teaching staff.

The Early Years Learning Framework has been examined in detail and implemented by the early childhood teaching staff and the National Quality Standards have also been included when deliberating about the school's programs.

The Upper Primary children again participated in the creative writing program, Born Storytellers. Their books were launched at the Perth Writers' Festival at the University of Western Australia and again were lauded by well-known authors and critics as being of a very high standard.



Key Student Outcomes

Student Attendance:

The average number of student enrolments in 2014 was 127 with 93% attendance.

National Assessment Program for Numeracy and Literacy:

We are obliged to participate in this national assessment but do not believe these results are a true reflection of children's academic achievements on their own. All assessment results, from a variety of sources, need to be taken into consideration when determining children's academic progress, NAPLAN is but one minor part of this assessment.

	Year 3 (less than 10 students) Above National Standard	Year 5 (12 students) Above National Standard
Reading	100%	100%
Writing	100%	100%
Spelling	100%	100%
Grammar & Punctuation	100%	100%
Numeracy	100%	100%

No results are shown for Year 7 as there were less than 5 children and the results would contravene Privacy Laws. As there were less than 10 children in Year 3 and only 12 children in Year 5 the above results are not seen as a true reflection of our school program and should not be taken as such. As we have a small cohort of children, we examine the results on an individual basis.

Reporting to Parents:

Written formal reports are provided to children and parents each semester.

Parent Teacher interviews are held at the end of terms 1 and 3 at which time teachers discuss the children's current progress and program for the future.

Parent Child sessions are held twice annually when children bring their parents to school to show them their work, both practically and by work samples.

Parents & Friends Association

There is a great volunteer quote from Elizabeth Andrew,
“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they have the heart”.

In 2014 we made progress in our interaction with the wider community with our inaugural Summer Lecture Series. Both lectures were hard hitting, captivating and thoroughly provocative and thought provoking with much discussion being had weeks after the events had finished. Although the initial numbers were lower than expected a large percentage were people from the wider community and not directly associated with the school.

Our music Quiz again lead the way with fun, laughs and serious trivia business as one of our main fundraisers for the year which again was well represented with many attending the event from the wider community. A well run event, with a huge number of donations being made available from local businesses saw this event a success again.

A fortunate opportunity for us this year was being approached to run a sausage sizzle and refreshments stand at the school to cater for those attending to Vote in the past election. This again gave us great exposure to the wider community as we catered to a wide and varied group of voters. A huge expression of support was shown by a large number of school families who provided an abundance of wonderfully decorated cupcakes for the event. Something I hope we can harness again in the year to come.

The year also saw us with some more “firsts” for our school:

The Cubic 27 exhibition a wonderful initiative that brought a valuable artistic focus to our school community for a number of months with over 300 attendees on the night. Many thanks to Kevin and Judith Price without whom the event could not have happened.

The Classroom Grants program that saw us build directly into classrooms with much needed resources, equipment or the like.

The installation of Air-conditioning to Riverdome including the Music and Art rooms.

I would like to take the opportunity to make special mention of our wonderful executive committee – Jason Anderson, Cassandra Bull and Debbie Morley.

This year saw a champion of our school Tamara Scott take on a leadership role yet again by way of Fundraising Co-ordinator. Easily one of the most challenging roles was once again fulfilled by someone who has given much of herself to the P&F and wider school community for many years.

Finally I would sincerely like to thank our principal Ineke Oliver for her continued support, leadership, and being someone that is truly committed to walking side by side with those that want to make a positive impact in our school.



Ryan Cope, President

Memberships

School Memberships:

- ❖ Montessori Australia Foundation
- ❖ Association of Business Administrators
- ❖ AISWA – Association of Independent Schools of WA
- ❖ Autism Association of WA
- ❖ Asthma Foundation
- ❖ Dyslexia-Speld Foundation

Principal Memberships:

- ❖ Swan Chamber of Commerce
- ❖ Early Years in Education Society
- ❖ Early Childhood Australia
- ❖ Australian College of Education
- ❖ Independent Primary School Heads of Australia Ltd.
- ❖ WA Primary Principals Association

School Community Satisfaction

Parents:

In 2014 the parent community participated in a Parent Survey seeking their response and suggestions regarding matters in relation to the communications between the school and the parent community, their satisfaction with the school and ideas for improvement. The results demonstrated a very high level of community satisfaction.

There continues to be an increased number of retained enrolments in the primary classes. More particularly, between the Children's Houses and Lower Primary.

Students:

Each formal report provides a place for children to comment on their learning experiences in the previous semester. These comments are written only by the children and where necessary, directly transcribed by the teachers. The comments are almost always positive and relate to both academic and social experiences.

We continue to get positive feedback from our parents that the children are always eager to return to the school after holidays. This is something of which we are proud, it proves we are providing an educational program that they feel they can enjoy and are keen to continue, we aim to foster this love of learning.

Behaviour management is not an issue at our school. Whilst children move through developmental stages where they test boundaries from time to time, they are managed in a caring supportive environment. The Virtues program is implemented throughout the school and complements the Montessori philosophy and ethos.

Teachers:

Regular staff meetings, the open-door policy of the Principal and the continued high level of professionalism by all contribute to the overall satisfaction of all staff in the school.

Teaching staff (and administration staff) all enjoy a high level of respect from both the parent and students in the school community. The Board of management also expresses its high level of satisfaction with the staff.

